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THE DALLAS TIMES HERALD
21 January 1977

Bush makes plans for return home

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WASHINGTON — George Bush watched the inauguration of President Jimmy Carter in the warmth of his own library Thursday, free of the responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency and relieved that Carter had not asked him to stay.

If Bush, who served one year as CIA director, was apprehensive about the future of the nation's intelligence service under the new President, he did not express it.

Does he know what Carter wants by way of direction for the Central Intelligence Agency? "No," said Bush. He left it at that.

Carter's choice of former Kennedy aide Theodore Sorensen as Bush's successor at CIA raised sufficient doubts in the Senate that Sorensen was the one nominee for the new administration who withdrew under fire.

The CIA was the one agency considered necessary to national security that would not have a new head ready for confirmation by the Senate today.

Carter did not ask Bush to stay and Bush was glad he didn't. "I probably would have said yes, but once a decision is made, changing becomes awkward. The CIA has good deputies," Bush said.

So the former Houston congressman, onetime ambassador to the United Nations, Republican national chairman and chief of U.S. liaison in Peking closed down a varied 10-year career in government.

His resignation was effective at noon. First he went to the White House for breakfast with President Ford and members of the Cabinet, then to the CIA complex in suburban Langley, Va.

"I signed papers just like I was going to be there forever. It was eerie. Suddenly I saw it was 11:30. I threw my unclassified papers into a briefcase and came charging home. That was it, except for the safe that's still there," he said.

The CIA will pick up the safe when it's convenient and remove the phone lines that kept Bush in instant touch with sensitive security centers.

Two weeks from now, the Bushes will return to Houston and a newly purchased home there.

The former Houston oilman sold his interest in Zapata Offshore Oil Co. when he was elected to Congress in 1966. He now has no office to return to and no business connection but several invitations to serve on corporate boards of directors.

Other than lecturing as a Chubb fellow at Yale next week (the same chair former President Ford will fill two weeks later), he has no definite plans.

"I want to keep my interest in foreign affairs and national politics. I don't want

to be a big shot about Texas politics, but I do want to get involved," he said of the future.

"I would never under any circumstances run against John Tower (for the Senate next year). I told him that. He stuck by me in complicated times. That in itself is sufficient reason. He's been a friend, and you don't reward friendship by turning on a guy.

"Yes, it means I'm not going to run for governor. If I have any political future, I don't think it would include that," Bush said.

Now 52, Bush was considered to have been the second choice of both Presidents Nixon and Ford for appointment as vice president when that position had to be filled twice in the last three years. He was considered a natural for the running-mate position on the 1976 Republican presidential ticket but was denied consideration by commitments made to secure his confirmation as director of CIA.

Star-crossed as his political career has been (including two races and two defeats for the U.S. Senate), Bush said of politics, "I have it in my system. I have to keep the window open a little."

At the same time, he wants to keep up his contacts abroad, implying some limited connection with a multinational corporation or perhaps with the academic community. He said he had discussed the possibilities with retiring Secretary of State Henry S. Kissinger and with retiring Vice President Nelson Rockefeller.

Meanwhile, he said "It was terribly important to get out of Washington and do it quickly."

The last few days of tenure in an intelligence job he did not seek or relish at the outset were traumatic. There were the awards of a National Security Medal and National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal from President Ford and the Distinguished Intelligence Medal from careerists at the CIA.

And there were emotional farewells at the CIA's wooded and secluded complex across the Potomac. On Wednesday, Bush and his wife shook hands with and said goodbye to each of the CIA's untold number of employees. It took three hours.

Then, finally and for the record, there was a letter from Bush addressed to "my fellow employees" giving the most recent director's views on the nation's foreign intelligence operation.

First his letter said he had never been associated with any institution that gave its leadership more cooperation and more support.

"It is essential," the letter continued, "that the American people give this agency its full, unqualified support. The world we live in demands no less."